

JAPAN CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY NEWS

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UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST STATEMENT ON SHRINE PROBLEM

The Third Executive Committee Meeting of the United Church of Christ since the General Assembly of the Church last October, has issued a statement in connection with the currently mooted problem of reinstating the Ise Shrines as "national shrines". The statement, in brief, expresses the will of the United Church to have an early stop put to the movement to reinstate the shrines. The Church is unqualifiedly opposed to this movement on the grounds that it threatens to abrogate the Constitutional principles of the separation of Church and State and the freedom of religion. The statement was concurred in by the district chairmen of the Church who were also at this meeting.

The controversy about the Ise Shrines will be taken up at the coming General Assembly of the National Christian Council of Japan; and it has been reported in previous issue of The News, No. 140.

SEIKOKAI CENTENARY PLANS READY

Plans for the Centenary of the Nippon Seikokai were reviewed at a meeting of the Central Committee in mid-February. The meeting was presided over by the Rev. Keitaro Nishimura, Chairman of the Committee, who called for reports from those responsible for administering the several aspects of the Centenary. The Rev. Nobumoto Takuma as program chairman explained the proposed events in detail. Mr. Saburo Matsuno will be in general charge of events during the three day period of the celebrations.

The Centenary will begin officially with the arrival of distinguished foreign guests, notably the representatives of the Anglican Church throughout the world. The Most Rev. Geoffrey Fisher, Archbishop of Canterbury, will arrive by plane on the eve of the celebrations, and will be preceded some days before by the Presiding Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the U.S.A., the Primates of All Canada and Australia, and other guests, numbering nearly fifty in all. Among these will be several former missionaries to Japan and parties of Japanese churchmen from Hawaii and the West Coast of America.

The major events of the Centenary will take place at the Tokyo Athletic Center in Sendagaya and Tucker Hall, St. Paul's University. It is expected there will be over seven thousand persons attending these events including guests from other Protestant groups, religious organizations and government as well as churchmen from the ten dioceses of the Seikokai.

The Centenary Memorial Ceremony, on the afternoon of April 7, will begin at one-thirty, with a great procession of the clergy and delegates from the Church's various organizations. There will be greetings from a number of the guests and the main address will be given by the Rt. Rev. Arthur Lichtenberger, recently installed as the Presiding Bishop of the American Church.

An augmented choir formed about a nucleus of voices from St. Paul's University and St. Luke's Hospital Chapel choirs, and under the direction of Mr. John Saruta, Assistant Director of the St. Paul's University School of Church Music, will lead the singing.

A reception for representatives from overseas churches and other guests will follow the Ceremony. And the evening of the first day will present an open lecture meeting, beginning at seven o'clock, at which there will be short addresses by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Presiding Bishop of the Church in the U.S.A., followed by the main lecture by the Rt. Rev. Peter Teijiro Yanagihara, Bishop of Osaka.

The Centenary Worship Service, a Celebration of the Holy Communion, will be the feature of the second day's program. The Rt. Rev. Michael Hinsuke Yashiro, Presiding Bishop of the Seikokai is to be the Celebrant and The Archbishop of Canterbury the sermoner. The former will address the assembly that afternoon, choosing as his subject "One Hundred Years of the Nippon Seikokai--Some Reflections". And in the evening there will be a panel discussion, at Tucker Hall of St. Paul's University, moderated by the Rev. Samuel Horie, Chairman of the Department of Education of the Seikokai. The subject is to be "Looking Ahead to the Next Hundred Years".

The morning and afternoon of the ninth of April will find the 26th General Convention of the Nippon Seikokai in session at St. Paul's University. And that evening, as the wind-up to the Centennial program, there will be a festival in Tucker Hall.

The post-Centenary schedule of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Residing Bishop of the Church in the U.S.A., as well as of other distinguished guests who shall be remaining in Japan for some time, includes preaching engagements in several places and visitation to many of the institutions of the Church as well as sightseeing: The Archbishop will receive the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Litt., from St. Paul's University, April 9th and will take part in the Consecration of the New Kobe Cathedral and the Dedication of a new classroom building at Momoyama University, Osaka. He is to be received by the Emperor and press on the morning after his arrival and will be entertained by the Prime Minister sometime during his visit.

The purpose of the Centenary Celebrations, as adopted by the General Committee is "to show forth thanksgiving and praise for the first hundred years of the Church in Japan and to renew commitment as we face the coming century." The plans which have reached the final stage and present the consideration of several years, have been frequently noted as overbalanced on the side of "formalism" to the neglect of serious reflection on the lessons of the past and the challenge of the future; as predominantly "memorial" and not "forward-looking". But hope has been expressed that the concern for the future voiced in the finalizing of the Centenary plans will be unmistakably expressed in the course of the ceremonies. And that the Nippon Seikokai may in some sense be inspired by them to a renewal of commitment as the Church begins its second century.

THE HUNDRED MILLION AND FIRST BIBLE TO THE CROWN PRINCE

The Gideon Bible Society of Japan recently marked the occasion of completing the distribution of one million Bibles, with a meeting, February 7, at the Biwako Hotel in Otsu. One hundred and twenty six persons attended this meeting to offer thanks for the achievement of the Society in the past nine years and to honor the men who have taken part in its Program, most of them business and professional People.

The Society began its work here in 1950 and was at first under the leadership of Mr. Akiyo Igarashi, outstanding Christian layman and head of the Hakuyosha Company. The present President of the Gideon Bible Society of Japan is Mr. Shujiro Yasuda.

In order to make possible the distribution of a million copies of the Bible over 140,000,000 Yen was raised. The Otsu assembly heard a report of the work that the Society has accomplished and about its hopes for the future. Prominent in the affairs of the Society has been Mr. J. Holzwarth, who came to Japan from the Society's Headquarters in Chicago. Mr. Holzwarth has returned to the United States since the Otsu meeting, having finished his period of service in Japan.

As a special act of this occasion, the Society presented the one million and first copy of the Bible to be distributed in this country to the Crown Prince. This copy was prepared in America with a red morocco leather cover on which are inscribed the words, "His Highness The Crown Prince Akihito." The presentation was made at the Crown Prince's residence, February 4, by a delegation from the Society including pre-

AVACO WORK DURING 1958

Numbers can't tell the whole story, but sometimes they tell a lot. The following are a few of the interesting statistics concerning AVACO, the Audio Visual Activities Commission of the National Christian Council of Japan, for the calendar year 1958.

During 1958, AVACO's total regular and special budgets totaled approximately \$50,000, of which about three fifths was raised in Japan. Letters and visitors to the Christian Audio Visual Center last year brought over 11,000 requests of various kinds. Thirty-eight board and committee meetings were held. AVACO has a staff of thirty-two full time workers including seven with master's degrees, on a total salary budget of about fifteen thousand dollars.

FILM LIBRARY

During the year there were six hundred and twenty-five loanings of films, sometimes involving several showings each. The films, DUST OR DESTINY and KING OF KINGS were each loaned more than fifty times.

The two Tokyo filmstrip libraries record 2,749 separate filmstrip loanings and 95 persons also borrowed a filmstrip projector. 752 kamishibai were rented. No statistics from five branch libraries are available.

Over thirteen thousand slides were duplicated or sold, and 951 filmstrips and 348 kamishibai were sold, along with 79 "picture stories", and fifty "illuminated kamishibai". Five AVACO kerosene projectors were sold in the country and approximately fifty-five overseas. 307 tapes were dubbed and sold, mainly hymns and chime music. 470 tapes were rented.

RADIO AND TELEVISION

AVACO was liaison with the government radio network providing speakers or suggesting programs for 188 different programs, including a complete Christmas worship on Christmas day.

In addition, AVACO tapes of the programs, "Women's Talk", "Songs of the Heart", "My Musi " and "The Knock on the Door" were broadcast over from three to seven stations each, for a total of 348 separate broadcasts.

AVACO paid approximately four thousand dollars to purchase air time on Rodio Tokyo for its weekly program "Songs of the Heart", 6:30 a.m. Saturdays. Broadcast fifty-two times during the year this program brought in 3,411 cards and letters, many of the correspondents being brought through this contact into relationship with a neighborhood church.

AVACO's total radio budget for the above was approximately \$11,000, including followup.

AVACO sent 101 tapes of six different programs to Okinawa for broadcast over the new Christian radio station there. These tapes were also made available to the Far East Broadcasting Company in Manila.

In the field of television the Bible Society's film, THE NATIVITY, was telecast at Christmas time, and AVACO's puppet film the GOOD SOIL was telecast several times. On Christmas Eve a special Christmas candle-light service was telecast in Tokyo.

LEADERSHIP TRAINING

In addition to the regular summer workshop with twenty courses which drew over 600 participants, AVACO's leaders conducted six other regional and special workshops.

PROJECTED AND NON-PROJECTED AIDS

AVACO produced one black and white, 16 mm. film, SONGS OF THE HEART with sound in Japanese and English.

In projected aids AVACO produced three filmstrips, ZACCHAEUS, JUST ONE WOMAN, and THE PASSION STORY IN ART. One slide set on occupational evangelism was produced.

One "illuminated kamishibai", THE BIRTH OF JESUS was added to the eight titles being sold, and four "ebanashi" were produced and put into mass production, SOLOMON, DANIEL, ELISHA AND NAAMAN, and THE LOST OWL.

TAPE AND FILM RECORDING

During 1958 the AVACO Radio Drama Group recorded dramatic narrations with sound effects and background music for six filmstrips. In addition, Japanese soundtracks were recorded on magnetribe on seven films. Lip synchronized sound was provided for such films as THE SUPREME SECRET, THE PROMISE, WHERE LOVE IS GOD IS and SECOND CHANCE.

RELATIONS ABROAD

AVACO is operating increasingly as a center for research, distribution of information and export of equipment and materials for Asia. Among the items investigated and exported in 1958 were filmstrip and slide projectors, cameras, hearing aids, earphones, radios, mimeographs, paints, and similar items.

